

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

SE Politics
HD **Politics Briefing: Morneau says fall update happening soon; Also: The one-year anniversary of the detentions of two Canadians in China**
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Hello,

With the House back in session and the Liberal government getting its ducks in a row, Finance Minister Bill Morneau made two pieces of news this morning.

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First, the Liberals tabled a ways and means motion to enact a tax cut they [campaigned on](#) in the election. The basic personal amount that one can earn before paying taxes would go up to \$15,000 (from \$13,229), though the savings would be phased out for high income earners. The Liberal minority government will require the support of at least one opposition party to pass the measure. The Liberals are selling the tax cut as a measure for those in the “middle class and those working hard to join it,” as they say. The constant pitch for the middle class, including having a minister designated as being for the middle class, makes more sense when you see that [more than three-quarters of Canadians](#) consider themselves middle class.

Second, he said the government will finally produce a fall fiscal update “before Christmas.” The House of Commons rises for a holiday break on Friday, but the update could happen next week. In the past, the Liberal government has used the fall update as a mini-budget with a big announcement in it, such as the launch of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. However, Mr. Morneau gave no indication what would be in this update.

Mr. Morneau also has federal-provincial issues to work on, as he meets his provincial and territorial counterparts next week. He has indicated he is [open to changing](#) the rules for the fiscal stabilization fund.

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TODAY’S HEADLINES

Today is the one-year anniversary of Chinese authorities arresting two Canadians as part of what has been described as “hostage diplomacy.” The arrests of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were in apparent retaliation for Canadian police arresting Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in Vancouver days earlier. The two men were [kept in conditions](#) similar to solitary confinement for the first six months, but have since moved to other detention conditions. Still, they have not been able to see visitors – such as family or lawyers – other than a monthly 30-minute consular visit. They have also been given little understanding of the timeline and process of charges against them.

Conservative Senators Leo Housakos and Thanh Hai Ngo are [tabling a motion](#) this week calling for the federal government to impose sanctions on Chinese officials involved in human-rights abuses against Hong Kong protesters and minority Muslims in western China. The Canadian government is facing pressure from pro-democracy groups to impose sanctions, while also facing pressure from the Chinese government, which has warned them against it. Meanwhile, the Chinese government says the mostly-Muslim detainees in its forced indoctrination centres have “[graduated](#),” but critics say it’s unclear how many are being released.

Environment Minister Jonathan Wilkinson heads to the United Nations climate change conference in Madrid this week, where delegates are debating Article 6, one of the final pieces of the Paris agreement. The article concerns rules for international co-operation on markets for trading carbon credits. Before leaving, Mr. Wilkinson told The Globe that the liquefied natural gas industry was not likely to play a part “[in the very short term](#).”

At least eight class-action lawsuits approved by judges are in danger of being [shut down](#) because of a new Ontario law that applies retroactively.

People’s Party of Canada Leader Maxime Bernier is threatening to sue political consultant Warren Kinsella [for defamation](#), and has hired former Ontario ombudsman André Marin to represent him.

And Finland is about to get a new prime minister in what is being hailed as a real generational shift. Sanna Marin, 34, is set to become the world’s youngest sitting prime minister. Her senior cabinet ministers are [all women](#).

[Campbell Clark \(The Globe and Mail\)](#) on the meeting between Justin Trudeau and Jason Kenney: “Mr. Kenney’s popularity has taken a dip, his spending cuts are proving controversial and Alberta’s unemployment rate is climbing. He swept to power in April, but it’s not easy to lead a province in tough times, even if you are the leader who united Alberta’s conservatives. So it would be a good time for the Premier to claim a concession from Ottawa – to be able to tell Albertans that his tough stand brought home something his predecessor, NDP premier Rachel Notley, never could.”

[Eugene Lang \(The Globe and Mail\)](#) on Canada’s international defence commitments: “Canada spends about 1.3 per cent of GDP on national defence, tying us for fourth with Italy within the G7. Yet, Ottawa has never fully accepted the validity of the defence-spending-to-GDP measure. Both the Harper government – which signed the Wales Declaration, enshrining the 2-per-cent NATO target – and the Trudeau government have claimed input measures such as the GDP ratio don’t tell the full story, and that output indicators are more meaningful. The defence output measure that is best understood is the extent to which a country’s military is engaged in operations internationally. On that score, Canada looks terrible. We have fewer troops deployed abroad today on NATO, United Nations and other multilateral missions than in decades.”

[Diane Francis \(Financial Post\)](#) on what could happen if there is an economic downturn: “A recession will ravage the middle class due to this economic damage and Ottawa’s failure to act on the flood of tens of billions of laundered dollars flowing into Toronto and Vancouver real estate. This has driven up costs, mortgage debt and living expenses.”

[Christopher Neal \(The Globe and Mail\)](#) on Mark Carney’s new job for the United Nations, persuading businesses to act on climate change: “In his speeches to influential market players, he has already helped to shift the emphasis of climate discussions. He’s an economist and a banker, not given to Chicken Little-style alarmism. Unlike some activists, he does not emphasize calls for voluntary individual action or demand a root-and-branch rethink of capitalism to stem climate change. Rather, he talks about the mounting financial risks facing companies, including those in the fossil-fuel industry, as the need for climate action grows more urgent.”

[Cindy Blackstock \(Maclean’s\)](#) on the government and its care of Indigenous children: “The government of Canada is a repeat offender when it comes to discrimination against First Nations children. Yet it is so bound up in its colonial ideology that it expects First Nations to be grateful for small measures that relieve some, but not all, of its discriminatory conduct. In 2020, it is time to stop feeding the government’s insatiable appetite to be thanked for its inadequate measures and to demand a complete end to the inequality.”

[Robyn Urback \(The Globe and Mail\)](#) on requiring vaccinations in schools: “But by allowing religious or philosophical exemptions for unvaccinated students – and in most provinces, having no vaccination requirements at all – we permit students to sit in classrooms incubating certain preventable illnesses,

potentially transmitting them to immunocompromised students or other vulnerable community members. The situation is not unlike allowing a student to come to school with a quiet case of head lice, except these lice could leave you permanently disabled or dead.”

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